

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 6-7 with the following rewritten paragraph:

--Cartridge assembly 16 includes a cartridge 16a housing a plurality of staples (not shown), a channel portion 30 defining a recess for receiving cartridge 16a, a dynamic clamping member 32 (FIG. 7), and a sled 31. Dynamic clamping member 32 preferably is positioned proximally of the sled 31 within cartridge 16a. A knife blade 34 is preferably positioned on an intermediate, preferably central, body portion 32a of dynamic clamping member 32 to incise fastened tissue. The knife blade 34 may be machined directly into the dynamic clamping member or may be fixedly or removably secured thereto. Alternately, knife blade 34 may be formed on or fixedly, removably or pivotally secured to the sled. Sled 31 is slidably positioned to translate through cartridge 16a to eject staples from the cartridge in a known manner.

Dynamic clamping member 32 includes upper and lower flanges 36a and 36b. As shown in FIG. 5, flange 36a is positioned within a slot recess 38 formed in cartridge 16a and flange 36b is positioned within a recess 40 formed in anvil 14. Alternately, flanges 36a and 36b need not be slidably positioned in recesses but rather need only engage an upper bearing surface on anvil 14 and a lower bearing surface on cartridge assembly 16. As illustrated in FIG. 7, flanges 36a and 36b preferably are arcuate or semi-circular to minimize deflection and maintain alignment of the anvil and/or cartridge during actuation of the stapler. Dynamic clamping member 32 is positioned proximally of the sled in engagement therewith and is translatable through the cartridge. ~~Closure member~~ Dynamic clamping member 32 provides, restores and/or maintains a

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desired, preferably uniform, tissue gap in the area of tool assembly 12 adjacent sled 31 during firing of device 10. Movement of dynamic clamping member 32 through cartridge assembly 16 advances the sled through the cartridge assembly.--